

# AEA FOCUS

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Wow! The Holiday season is upon us already! I have been thinking what a privilege it is to be an American even in these trying times. November 2008, what a month! It will be remembered as one of the most historic elections in modern history. This President will not only be charged with guiding us through one of the most dire economic crises to hit our country in almost 70 years, but also to act swiftly upon the educational woes in which our country is mired. He will initiate changes that will directly affect both our personal and our professional lives. The specific steps he will propose to alleviate the many issues that face our beleaguered educational system remain to be seen. As this country is facing challenges on many fronts, so are we as an Association. No matter whom you voted for as our next President of this country, hopefully you can put the negative aspects of the whole process behind you. This election highlighted the power of the individual as a member of a group and took its impact to unprecedented levels. It displayed a full-scale grassroots campaign, motivating millions of people with a unified idea and purpose into personally contacting others in an effort to bring about necessary change. That's how this election was won. In my opinion the strategy used by the campaign organizers to coordinate this election was the ultimate example of the power of unionism. Effective organizing and active participation are the cornerstones of any healthy union. The AEA Executive Committee and PSEA are committed to the health of this organization and are working diligently to maximize our impact. I will close with this passage from Jim Testerman President of PSEA.

"My fellow presidents, earlier this month we elected a new President of the United States. As people who have been involved, to varying degrees, with campaigning and elections, you know that getting elected is in many ways the easy part. Whether you came into your office after a spirited, but respectful, race among committed candidates or whether you were, as we so often joke, "the person who missed the meeting that day," you know that the celebration and congratulations were short-lived because the business of leading would not wait. And in locals from 25 to 1,000 members, you've no doubt learned that the best leader in the world can do little without a committed and involved membership. When the will of the members matches the hard work of the president, great change can be achieved. So as we begin this new chapter in our shared American history, let us all commit to being the involved and committed members in our country that we wish for in our locals."

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## FOC-ED

FOC-Ed will start in the next issue of Focus. Find the misspellings in the content and email Melvin with the mistakes. Your name will then be put in for a drawing 2 names will be drawn from those entries and awarded a \$20 gift card. More details will follow.

## AEA Calendar

Dec 10 – Exec Committee Meeting  
Dec 17 – Faculty Rep Meeting @ Union Terrace  
Dec 24 – Jan 2 – Winter Holiday

## HEADS UP!

- Congratulations to our very own John Annoni, who has been teaching 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Trexler for many years. He is in the final running for Outdoor Life's Top 25 Award honoring his Camp Compass program. To help him achieve this award we are asking everyone to go online to [www.johnannoni.com](http://www.johnannoni.com) to vote for him.
- Another reminder that if you have a My Space or Facebook page, be sure to keep it private and don't put anything in electronic form that you wouldn't want viewed by millions of people including your colleagues, students, and supervisors – and your mother!
- As in the past if you miss your prep, please continue to fill out a timesheet as well as the proper AEA form. See your building rep or call Melvin with any questions.
- THE EDUCATOR'S TAX DEDUCTION IS BACK! Due to the Wall Street bailout, you can again deduct up to \$250 a year for unreimbursed costs of classroom supplies even if you don't itemize. Save your receipts. This applies to counselors, K-12 teachers, principals and aides who worked at least 900 hours.
- Be sure to save your last pay stub of the year so you can deduct your union dues when filing this year's taxes.
- Urban Conference Update – Four of our members joined other PSEA members from around the state to discuss many current issues that are affecting urban education. There was strong dialogue and plans were developed to move ahead. Future meetings include December and May in an effort to continue our work.

We are also dialoguing with community members, district personnel, and PSEA leadership in an attempt to address current issues in education.

- Online template help –
  - go to <http://office.microsoft.com> – click on 'templates' tab at top - then on left side 'back to school' – you can access templates for certificates, tests, etc
  - go to [www.education-world.com](http://www.education-world.com) – click on 'school issues' tab (yellow one at top) – then on the left hand side near the bottom click on 'more resources' then 'tools and templates' – you can access calendars, graphic organizers, fliers, posters, worksheets, book report forms, etc.
- Another huge reminder – be patient. Grievances are a process and take time.

## Congratulations

Congratulations to all teachers for their fine work. Without your hard work and dedication this award would not have been possible. ASD was awarded the Compass Award for the civics education programs. Myron Yoder, Dana Kowalchuk, Angela Nacci, and Richard Grab were instrumental in helping achieve this award. For highlights and details visit the ASD web site.

## DEADLINES:

OptiVision – Open enrollment sign up through ASD ends on November 30, 2008. You can still join after that date but will have to pay for it yourself. The next open enrollment period will be May 2009.